



*Kneading Kitty's Rescue*

## My New Kitty Seems Shy. What Should I Do?

As you and your new furry friend get to know each other, keep in mind that some cats are ready for instant attention, but many are not. Cats can take anywhere from a few hours to a few weeks to adjust completely to a new environment. For kitties that are rescued, it's entirely possible that their past interactions with humans have not been positive. Your task will be to show your new friend that you are not threatening, that you are a source of good things (i.e.: food, praise, pets, and play)

If your cat seems a bit frightened or shy the suggestions below may help you to get started.

- Give the new kitty their own safe space in a smaller room that is comfortable for them (and you) but has few hiding places. You want them to be get used to seeing and interacting with you within this space. The room should have food, water, litter box, toys, a small cat tree, a comfy cat bed, and a spot for you as well.
- Enter the room quietly and calmly. Avoid loud noises or sudden movements. Have a comfortable spot for you that is close, but not too close to where the kitty likes to hang out in the room. If the kitty doesn't want to interact, give them time. It is good to just be in the shared space, so they get used to you by sight, sound, and smell. They won't mind if you read a book or scroll through your social media.
- Sit or lie prone on the floor if you can. In a seated or prone position, humans appear smaller and much less imposing and scary. This may give the kitty the opportunity and confidence to approach you.
- Talk or sing softly so that the kitty gets accustomed to human voices but in particular your voice. You can also put some mellow music on when you're not in the room.
- Even if the kitty is not ready to allow petting yet, they may still want to play. You can experiment with a variety of toys. In particular, wand toys where you are part of the interaction are a good bet. Toys that make a lot of noise may not be the best place to start.
- Food a.k.a. The Great Motivator. A trick of the trade here is a treat called Churu. Cats universally love it so much that some will bite the package to get more - so watch your fingers! May want to start by squeezing some on to a wooden spoon and offering it to them, and gradually moving it closer to you.
- Once a kitty rubs up against you, this is a good sign that they may be ready for some affection from you. But proceed with caution from this point, some key suggestions:

- Hold out one hand (or even just one finger) at their chin level, and let the kitty initiate the contact with you. Many times, the first contact will be with the cheek, chin, or a head bump.
- Slow and gentle petting movements are best. Do not reach out with both hands and pet vigorously like you might pet a dog!
- Some cats have strict boundaries for where they like to be pet. Some allow pets on the head, neck, and chin only. Some have very sensitive backs and will allow only limited petting there. Some allow tummy rubs, others don't. Very few enjoy a lot of contact with their tail. The point here... proceed slowly, pay attention to your cat's body language and actions, and don't try to force pets that they tell you they don't like.